BOOK REVIEW

PETER ROBERTS AND SHELLEY EVANS. 2011. **The Book of Fungi: A Life-size Guide to Six Hundred Species from Around the World.** (ISBN-13: 978-0-226-721172-0, cloth, alk. paper). University of Chicago Press, 1427 E. 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A. (**Orders:** Customer Service, Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 South Langley Avenue, Chicago, Ilinois 60628, 1-800-621-2736 (USA and Canada), 1-773-702-7000 (International), orders@press.uchicago.edu). $55.00, 656 pp., 2000 color plates, 7.5" × 11" × 2".

This is a big, weighty book illustrated with life-size color images of fungal fruit bodies that appear in ones, twos, or small groups but not in natural habitats. Each fungal species is given one full page that has the some standardized information: for example *Agaricus campestris* (Field Mushroom) starts with a brief description including habitats such as lawns, parks, pastures, and other areas of undisturbed short grass. Another section, Similar Species, notes species that appear morphologically similar but with a brief description of the differences. At the top fourth of the page is a world geographical map with the family, distribution, habitat, association, growth form, abundance, spore color, and edibility. The height and diameter of fruit bodies is given in an inset.

The beginning sections include a Foreword; Introduction; What are Fungi?; Plant and Animal Partners; Natural Recyclers; Pest and Parasites; Food, Folklore and Medicine; Distribution and Conservation; Collecting and Identifying Fungi; and Guide to the Fungi. The authors state, "This book is not a field guide …" and therefore keys to families and species are lacking. A picture guide is provided that highlights groups—e.g., "Agarics" are defined as having "fleshy fruit bodies, cap with or without stem, gills underneath cap," and this is the first group discussed, described, and illustrated beginning on page 31 and ending on page 323, representing 292 species or almost half of the 600 species. Next are the boletes, or fleshy pore fungi, on pages 325–361. The wood rotters are represented by the brackets, crusts, and jelly fungi on pages 362–461. Tooth fungi, chanterelles, clubs, and corals are a mixed bag of very different spore-bearing surfaces with little to argue for this grouping on pages 462–505. The puffballs and earthstars, bird's nests, and stinkhorns conclude the Basidiomycetes on pages 507–547. The Ascomycetes begin with the cup fungi, morels, truffles, flask fungi, and lichens on pages 549–641.

The text is written in nontechnical prose, readily understandable by the lay public, but a short 2-page Glossary of terms also aids the reader. Supplementary information is included in the following sections: Resources for further reading and general interest, The Classification of Fungi, Index by Common Name, and Index by Scientific Name. Some of the common names applied here are clever and new, for example, Beansprout Fungus (*Conocybe deliquescens*), Green Skinhead (*Cortinarius austrovenetus*), and Collard Parachute (*Marasmius rotula*) to mention a few.

This book is too bulky and heavy to carry into the field and therefore has limited value other than as a coffee table display that highlights the diversity of fungi in color and form. Some species can be identified by picture keying. Many mushroom books are similar in content especially in the introductory sections. The price is a bargain for a book this size containing color illustrations.—*Harold W. Keller, PhD, Research Associate, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas 76102, U.S.A.*